

**Fisheries Committee Meeting
February 6, 2016
Commission Room**

I. Discussion Item – Regulation Change to Hatchery Creek Put-Take Fishing Area

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife's (USFWS) Wolf Creek Hatchery has a put-take Rainbow Trout fishery which begins immediately below its raceways' outflow to approximately 400-feet downstream to a barrier falls, and that section is considered the upper area of the new Hatchery Creek. As expected, construction of the new stream below the upper area has compelled some trout to swim from the Lake Cumberland tailwater into the lower Hatchery Creek. Trout apparently have already navigated up the cascading falls near the tailwater and upstream to at least the barrier falls which was constructed to prevent migrating trout from leaving the harvest-restricted lower area and entering the upper put-take harvest area. However, despite the man-made falls, it appears that a few trout may have negotiated the barrier and entered into the upper put-take harvest area.

Rainbow Trout less than 15 inches in length are the only fish stocked in Hatchery Creek's upper area. Therefore, anglers have always had the ability to harvest any of the trout stocked in that area. Since all sizes of Rainbow, Brown and Brook trout may be capable of negotiating the barrier falls, the USFWS Hatchery Manager is concerned that current length and species related regulations in Hatchery Creek (which mimic the Cumberland Tailwater's) will result in unintentional illegal harvest in the upper Hatchery Creek. To prevent this from occurring, the hatchery manager has posted signs in the upper area to allow a daily harvest of 5 trout of any size and in species aggregate in the USFWS' Hatchery Creek's upper, put-take area. The Fisheries Division recommends that KDFWR propose the same regulation in order to facilitate our officer's ability to enforce USFWS' regulation in the upper area of Hatchery Creek.

Currently, trout harvest restrictions in the Cumberland Tailwater:

- 1) for Rainbow Trout: a 5-fish daily harvest limit; a no harvest slot limit (15-20 inches); and only one over 20 inches may be harvested daily;
- 2) for Brown Trout: a 20-inch minimum size limit and a daily harvest limit of 1 fish; and
- 3) for Brook Trout: a 15-inch size limit and a daily harvest limit of 1 fish.

II. Discussion Item – Trammel Creek Rainbow Trout Harvest Limit

Trammel Creek is a 4.4-mile, seasonal (October 1 through March 31) no-harvest stream located in Allen County, and it represents a somewhat rare stream type in Kentucky in that it has cold-water springs in its upper portion that keeps the water fairly cool in that area year-around. In some years, the cold water keeps much of the fishable stream cool enough to allow holdover of trout through the warm seasons. This fact has compelled some anglers to request a reduction in the number of Rainbow Trout that may be harvested daily in the creek during the period when harvest is permitted. Currently, Trammel Creek is regulated by our statewide, 8-Rainbow Trout daily harvest regulation, and the anglers have requested the daily limit for Rainbow Trout to be decreased to 5 fish in order to potentially allow more fish to holdover from year to year. The Fisheries Division agrees that there is some potential for

holdover trout in Trammel Creek. Since that potential is rare in Kentucky, we would like to investigate whether or not a reduction in the daily creel limit would promote survival of more holdover Rainbow Trout and provide a higher quality trout fishery in the southwest area of Kentucky.

III. Discussion Item – Add Kentucky Horse Park Lakes to Fishing-In-The-Neighborhood Program

The Kentucky Horse Park holds four ponds; one of which they would like to enroll in our FINS program. The 6-acre pond is located next to their camp ground, would be open to the public, and is in an ideal area for a FINS pond. We propose adding the pond to our FINS program. To simplify fishing regulations in the Horse Park, each of the four ponds would have the typical FINS regulations.

IV. Discussion Item – Asian Carp Harvest Program Regulation Change

The Asian Carp Harvest Program was developed to allow commercial fishing for the invasive fish in water that is otherwise restricted. As part of the program, commercial fishermen must request permission to fish in closed waters and provide information concerning specific dates, times, and locations of which they want to fish. Asian carp can move long distances in a very short time, and that fact has compelled fishermen to request an amendment to the regulation that would allow fishermen to call a KDFWR staff or officer to request a change in fishing location after they have found that the carps have moved from an area where they were expected to be inhabiting. In order to help the commercial fishermen's potential to fully exploit Asian carp in otherwise closed waters, we recommend an addition be placed in the regulation to allow last-minute changes to their original requests to fish specific locations.